

CHARIVARIA.

No women are allowed on the territory of the newest Republic, Mount Athos. An expeditionary force of Suffragettes is, we hear, to be fitted out at once. * *

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE, at the National Liberal Club, proposed the health of the members of the Liberal Insurance Committee. In the present congestion the health of the Insured will have to look after itself. * *

There is still a good deal of misconception in regard to the provisions of the Insurance Act. The wife of a Liverpool carter who presented her husband with a complete set of quadruplets last week was evidently under the impression that she would be entitled to four maternity boni. * *

The L. C. C. has decided that undertakers shall be exempt from the half-holiday under the Shops Act. It was no doubt realised that a holiday might render them unbecomingly cheerful. * *

Lecturing on "Heredity of Sex" at the Royal Institution, Professor BATESON said that there was a certain amount of truth in the theory that sons took after their mothers and daughters after their fathers. Our experience, however, is that the modern child insists on taking before its parents. * *

At the same time we can offer no objection to the title of the lecture—"Heredity of Sex." There can be no doubt that sex is hereditary, children almost invariably being of the same sex as one or other of their parents. * *

"VICTOR GRAYSON
WANTS A REVOLUTION"

"Daily Herald" poster.

A few public-spirited men are, we hear, thinking of clubbing together to buy Victor a ticket to South America. * *

It is pointed out that a house at Chertsey, which is now for sale, was the scene of Bill Sikes' burglary as set forth in *Oliver Twist*. We should have thought this would have been a questionable attraction to purchasers, for, no doubt, every fine Sunday a

number of well-read burglars make a pious pilgrimage to this house from the Metropolis, and stand gazing up at it, hat in hand. * *

Dr. FRANK MALLORY, of Harvard University, has, it is announced, isolated the whooping-cough germ. It is to be hoped that the noisy little beggar has been confined in a sound-proof cell. * *

A comedy called *The Joneses* is to be produced as soon as a suitable theatre can be secured. A play with this title should do well, if only all the Joneses go to see whether they are mentioned in it. * *

With reference to the burning of

with an English version, for the sake of our French visitors. * *

The interview, last week, between Mr. LLOYD GEORGE and the Fishwives must have been somewhat piquant. It is said that one of the ladies cried out, "Mr. GEORGE, where would you have been without Billingsgate?"

Practical Joking in the House.

"M.P.'S SEAT.

SOME OBSCURE LEGAL POINTS RAISED."
Liverpool Echo.

"As he sits before you at the breakfast table—for the breakfast table is his time for talk—he seems the most light-hearted and untroubled of men. Even little Megan, who passes you the jam—for you help yourselves in this informal household—does not seem more gay, nor the black pug that snores on the hearthrug more free from care."—From a character sketch of Mr. Lloyd George in "The Daily News and Leader."

Original and boldly innovating in all things, the CHANCELLOR, it will be noticed, dispenses with the servants, who, throughout breakfast, in less informal houses, stand behind one's chair.

"Dr. McClure, the headmaster of Mill Hill School, has been granted six months' leave . . . to attend a Sunday-school."—*The Presbyterian*.
It sounds rather a stiff course.

"One vice at a time, please," urged her husband, helping himself to a gammon of bacon."

From one of Messrs. Sxxxxxx's sparkling articles in "The Westminster Gazette."

Breakfast over, he resumed his injections of morphine.

"Governess, to take full charge of 3 children, including mailcart."—*Advt. in "Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury."*

To be precise, what is really wanted is a Groom-Governess.

"Recommended experienced chauffeur-mechanic, 4 years last situation, 75 years' private driving."—*The Autocar*.

The year 1838 will always be remembered for the impetus which it gave to the motor industry.

Winter Fashions.

"Early in the morning, shortly before 9 o'clock, His Royal Highness was seen around the magnificent grounds of 'Ravenscrag,' and at 9.30 he issued forth clad simply in a short overcoat, and with gaiters to protect his legs against the cold."—*Montreal Star*.



Wife of his Bosom (in course of domestic difference). "COWARD! BRUTE! RUFFIAN! PIG! MONSTER! BEAST! OH, I WISH YOU KNEW WHAT I THOUGHT OF YOU!"

Tom Jones at Doncaster, in order that the morals of racing men may not be imperilled, it always seems to us something of a mystery that many of our modern novels do not perish from spontaneous combustion. * *

From Paris it is announced that ladies' dresses are to be fitted up with pockets. So it is all over with man's one point of superiority over the other sex! * *

"TIME-TABLES NEEDLESS," announces a certain railway company. It will be interesting to see whether the idea spreads, and a certain other company announces "TIME-TABLES USELESS." * *

In a new edition of a well-known cookery book some strictures are passed on the French to be found on our average menu. We certainly think that it should always be accompanied

THE CONSCIENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

[For once in a way the Party Whips were taken off and Members were allowed, on the Women's Suffrage question, to vote according to their consciences. Partly owing to atrophy of this organ, some very strange and complicated intrigues resulted from the Cabinet's dispensation.]

WHAT mean these most unusual cries
That hurtle through the deafened lobbies,
Cross-questions and oblique replies
From those who back their several hobbies,
All, like the polyglots of Babel,
Talking as hard as ever they are able?

What should portend this curious breach
Of Liberal tie and Tory tether;
Old foes embracing each with each
And friends at fisticuffs together,
So that you get no sort of clue
From party labels as to who is who?

Can Reason from her throne have fled?
Over some riddle, dark and knotty,
Has Parliament mislaid her head
And gone (in vulgar diction) dotty?
Nay! 'Tis the voice, long out of use,
The still small voice of Conscience breaking loose.

Conscience at play! Ah, picture how,
Ever the sport of cruel lashes
Laid by the Whips on back and brow,
All pink and blue with weals and gashes,
Trodden beneath the tyrant's boots,
Goaded and herded like dumb driven brutes—

Picture, I say, how when the yoke
Was lifted from his neck, poor martyr,
Like an emancipated mope
Free to enjoy the winds' wide charter,
Each Member tossed his happy heels
And filled the air with blithe, discordant squeals.

Look how their hearts and lungs expand
For joy of Freedom's fair amenities!
How bright, but (on the other hand)
How tragically brief a scene it is!
Too soon will they be summoned back
To play once more the hopeless party-hack.

Alas! so strong are habit's reins,
Meekly they'll reassume their fetters,
Cease to employ their private brains,
Sworn to the bidding of their sweaters,
And soak in that abysmal sink—
The life where nobody's allowed to think.

O. S.

Note received by a Liverpool doctor:—

"Mrs. — regrets not being able to keep her appointment with Dr. — owing to sickness to-day at 12 o'clock as arranged."

"Lost between Walton and Ormskirk, three Brown Hampers and one White one, named Seddon."—*Ormskirk Advertiser*.
We once had a bag that answered to the name of Gladstone; and it came to a bad end.

"In connection with the Highweek Church Sunday schools the annual treat was held on Thursday afternoon. . . . Miss — gave a disgraceful dance, which was highly appreciated."

Devon and Newton Times.

Human nature will out, even at a Sunday-school entertainment.

ALL THE WORLD'S A SCHOOL.

HAVING noticed in a contemporary an interview with Sir HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE, in which the great actor said not only, "I am completing my education by touring the world," but "I hope my holiday may be beneficial to my art, and therefore a benefit to the public," the Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society at once hurried to the home of the illustrious histrion with the purpose of putting a number of supplementary or "arising-out-of" questions.

He found Sir HERBERT three deep in the paraphernalia of travel. Moccasins and snowshoes jostled mosquito nets and sombreros. Here was an alpenstock, there an ice hatchet; guns, boots, howdahs, pith helmets were everywhere. GALTON'S *Art of Travel* lay on the floor, and beside it copies of *Near Home and Far Off*. Medicine chests were being filled; crates containing beads and gaily coloured cloths (for the natives) were being packed; busts of STANLEY and Captain COOK stood on the mantelpiece, each wearing a wreath.

In the midst of this confusion was Sir HERBERT.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, with his profound and unfailing courtesy.

"Observing," replied the visitor, "that you have selected travel as the medium by which you are to complete your education, I thought it would be interesting to inquire how far you mean to go?"

"My plans are not too definite," said Sir HERBERT. "I shall wander where I like."

"May I ask where you are going first?"

"To Moscow," said Sir HERBERT.

"And what particular mental vacuum do you expect that city to fill?"

"I am proposing there to take lessons in dancing. I think of attending the same school which sent forth the divine Nijinsky to enchant the world."

"Good," said the geographer, taking out his note-book. "And Austria?"

"Among the Tyrolese eminences I hope," said Sir HERBERT, "to perfect my jodelling."

"In China?"

"In China I intend to immerse myself in those ancient humours and emotions of the Celestial Empire which have just blossomed so gloriously at a neighbouring theatre managed by one of my knighted colleagues."

"You will return, I take it," hazarded his visitor, "when the education is complete—when the receptacle can hold no more?"

"Well, yes; let us leave it at that," said Sir HERBERT.

"That is to say, if you were on your way to Patagonia," continued the geographer, "and found at Buenos Ayres that you knew all, you would not proceed to Patagonia, but hurry back in order that the public might at once begin to 'enjoy the benefits'?"

Sir HERBERT TREE boughed, as to the manner born. "But," he said, "I must ask you now to excuse me. I have to leave in two hours."

"Certainly. But one more question, and the last," said the geographer, reaching for his hat. "How long do you expect to be away?"

"About a week, I think."

"The thing will be to see . . . the factory girl married to young Wakes."—*English Review*.

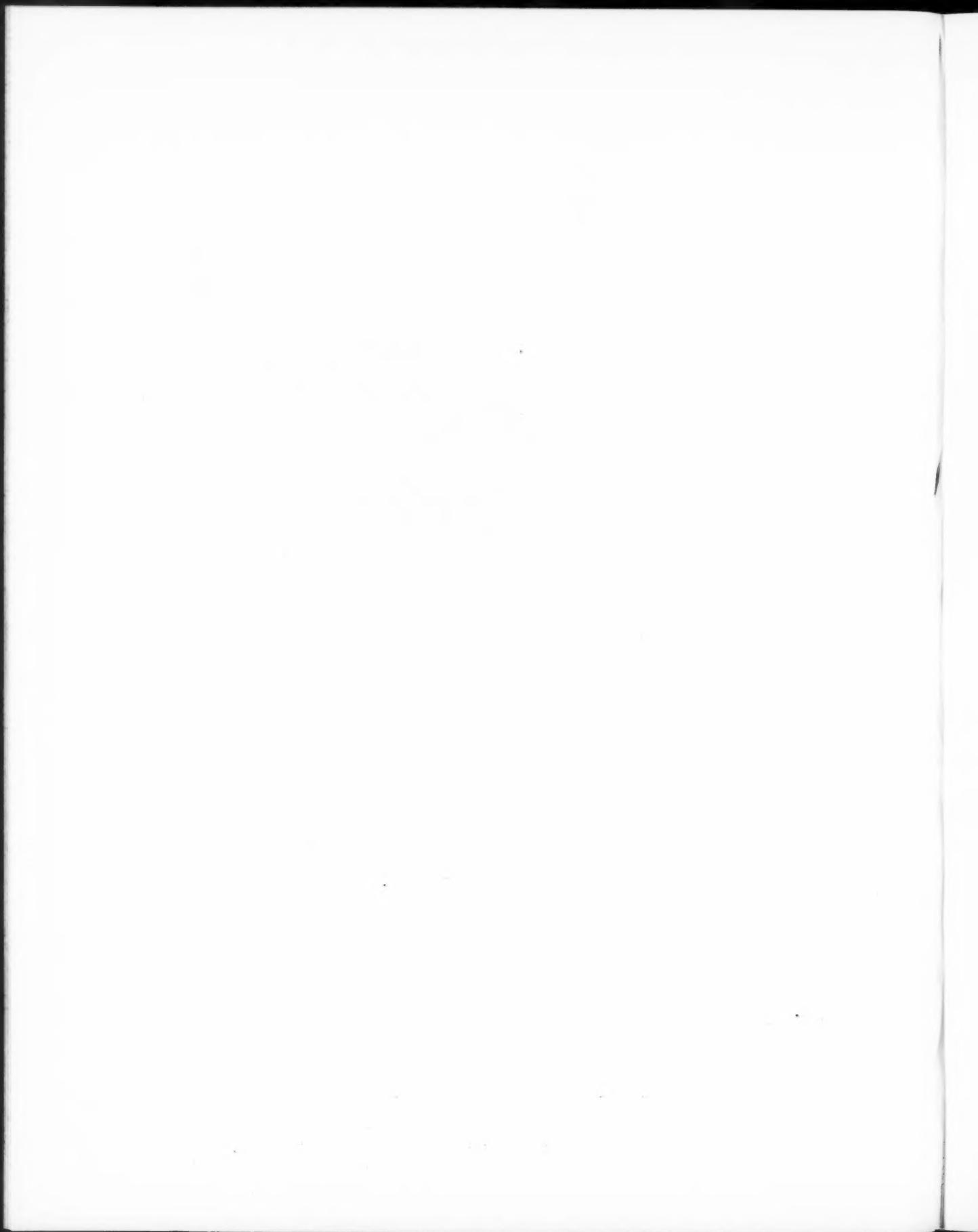
Other things to see will be "Our Liz" married to August Bankholiday, young Jeffcote eloping at dead of night with Hindle Town Hall, and our Dramatic Critic getting the play into his head.



THE SURREY RIVIERA.

FATHER THAMES (*singing plaintively*). "I KNOW A BANK WHERE THE FOUL SLIME FLOWS."

[London is beginning to recognise that it is high time to set about correcting the unsightliness of the Right Bank of the Thames.]





"HELLO! WHATEVER'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, BERTIE?"

"ROTTEN LUCK, OLD MAN; GOT AN ATHLETE'S HEART PLAYIN' 'COON-CAN.'"

THE MILO MEASURE.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—I wonder if you will be sweet enough to act as my advance agent in booming a little practical feminine invention which I am about to place on the market. As you know very well, the Venus di Milo represents that absolute ideal of proportion which every woman aims at, though, of course, the lady in the Louvre is on the large side and a little battered about the extremities. As no doubt you are also aware, some years ago certain artistic experts took the measurements of the statue and reduced them to normal human scale and have supplied the world with the measurements which are exactly those which the Venus di Milo would have possessed if she had been a living woman of 5ft. 4in. in height. Now, this table has hitherto apparently represented a hopelessly unattainable ideal, until quite recently the feminine world was fluttered by the news of an American girl whose measurements are claimed to approximate to those of the famous statue. It was then the busi-

ness of *The Daily Mirror* to find a successful rival in England, and, that being speedily accomplished, I think I may say without exaggeration that the interest in Milo measurements has become so universally keen that nearly every woman of average height on both sides of the Ocean has been busy with a tape measure.

I was lately assisting at one of these private *séances*, and it was when I noticed how frightfully bucked my friend was to find that her neck and ankles, for instance, were all right, and how disheartened she grew to find her waist and fore-arm, shall we say, were all wrong, that a great inspiration for the benefit of my sex flashed across my brain.

That inspiration has now borne fruit in "The Milo Measure," price 1/- in untarnishable nickel case (patent applied for). I guarantee that this dainty toilet necessity, on which the Milo measurements are marked out—7.4 inches for ankle, 13.2 for calf, 26 for waist, and so on—will make Venuses of all women of average height, and thus brighten the entire feminine outlook

and bring a rosy atmosphere of classical beauty to many a grey suburban home.

All that the purchaser has to do in order to make her proportions come out identical with those of the Milo is to grasp the end of the Measure between the thumb and finger of the left hand, place the thumb and finger of the right hand firmly on the particular number of inches required, and apply the Measure to each limb or feature in turn. The Measure will do the rest.

Yours very sincerely, EVA.

P.S.—I am confidently counting on your assistance, dear Mr. Punch, as my advance agent, so I think it is only right to inform you that "The Milo Measure" is made of elastic web.

"According to the 'Board of Trade Labour Gazette,' the greatest proportionate increases in food prices in 1912, compared with 1911, are as follow:—

Lead, 28.2 per cent.
Copper, 25.8 per cent.
Pig iron, 14.8 per cent.
Coal, 11.1 per cent."

Liverpool Echo.

And with food like this our teeth, too, will cost us more.

RUPERT.

RUPERT, the horse, came to us with the best references, and I'm sure he always meant well and tried his hardest, but we all have days when things go wrong and we feel like slamming the door or smashing something, and I think that was Rupert's trouble on the ill-fated morning.

Papa has an excellent custom of riding about the neighbourhood on horseback to shake up his—to keep him fit, and that was where Rupert came in; and, as I was saying, he was a conscientious horse and as a rule did the job well.

On the morning in question Papa had gone out riding and I was doing the housekeeping, and was in fact in the kitchen expounding the Insurance Act to the cook for about the twentieth time. It seemed to her unreasonable that she might not immediately begin to draw in some benefits, and I was at great pains making it clear to her that the game couldn't begin till she got ill or married or something, and that for the present she must derive what satisfaction she could from contemplating her card, which really looked very pretty with the stamp-collection on it.

The discourse was interrupted by the advent of Papa, who came in rather furtively through the back door with his hair awry and a lot of mud on his clothes. There was not the least doubt what had happened to him.

"Ah, Felicity," he began, "I—I've just returned—rather unexpectedly."

"Oh, Papa," I cried, "have you fallen off?"

"Certainly not," he answered with dignity. "Riding-men never fall off. Sometimes they are thrown, of course."

"Yes, I meant that. Are you hurt, dear? How did it happen?"

However, Papa was disinclined to relate the adventure in the presence of cook, naturally enough, and it was not till he had changed his clothes that I learned the details.

It appeared that all had gone well until they reached the open country, where they encountered two disreputable tramps, who joined hands and executed a dance in front of the horse. Rupert, unable to contain his indignation, reared up, and Papa lost his balance and slid off over his tail.

"And what did you do then?" I asked.

"I came away. I was too indignant to discuss the matter with them at any length: I could find no excuse for their behaviour. If they wished to dance they should have waited until a suitable occasion presented itself. It's a growing scandal, you know. Bad enough for people to go about without visible means of support. They should at least observe the common courtesies of the highway."

"Yes," I said, "advice would have been wasted on them; but what did you do with Rupert?"

"Well," he said, "it was rather a problem. He was a little difficult to

to parley with them, and I kept an eye on the proceedings from behind the window-curtain.

It was soon evident that they were demanding most extortionate sums for salvage, and I began to be afraid that Papa would be unable to cope with the situation, so I decided on immediate action, and, raising the sash, leaned out.

"Papa, papa," I cried.

"Yes, my dear."

"An awful thing's happened. The bloodhounds have escaped. They've eaten the under-gardener and they're tearing round the shrubbery."

The tramps threw up the game at once. In five seconds they were out of sight.

It took some time to reassure Papa, who at first believed that there really were bloodhounds concealed about the premises.

"Well, I thought you might have got some Felicity," he said; "I never know what you'll do next."

As a matter of fact we haven't any dog at all. The idea was mooted a short time ago, but Dora the cat and Stephen the hedgehog filed a petition against it and the proposal was dropped.

For some days the fate of Rupert was the chief topic under discussion. Papa said he felt he could never be reconciled to him again and refused even to go near the stable, and in the meanwhile Rupert took life easily and ate his head off.

"We'd better give him a month's notice," I said.

"Not at all," said Papa. "You don't do that with horses. The thing to do is to send the groom up to TATTERIDGE's with him and sell him; and I hope the man who buys the brute will enjoy himself."

This worked out all right. The TATTERIDGE people said there was no difficulty. If we would let them have the horse and furnish them with a description for the catalogue they would do the rest.

"We must try to get a real picture of Rupert," I said, "so that he'll go off well."

I took a lot of trouble with it. It went like this. You might like to hear it if you are interested in Rupert:—

"Good horse; very little worn; stock size; colour, vandyke brown; amiable; industrious; sober. To sell, or would exchange for nice sable stole and muff."

"I don't want a stole and muff, though," said Papa when I showed it him for criticism and appreciation.

"No, but you will soon," I said.



First Blood. "HAVE YOU READ THIS ABOUT THE DECLINE OF THE BIRTH-RATE?"

Second Blood. "YES; MAKES ONE RATHER ANXIOUS. AFRAID IT'LL LEAD TO CONSCRIPTION!"

deal with, and as the tramps offered to close in on him and bring him home when he appeared to be in a more reasonable frame of mind I accepted their proposal. It was, I thought, an opportunity to repair to some extent the mischief they had wrought."

"Papa, they'll steal him," I cried.

For a moment he seemed to brighten at the suggestion, but then he shook his head.

"I doubt it," he said. "They did not appear to me to be horsey men at all. I don't think they would have much use for Rupert."

And Papa proved to be right, for while we were sitting at lunch the tramps came up the drive with the horse in tow.

After some hesitation Papa went out

"When?"

"When my birthday comes next month."

However, the people at TATTERIDGE'S entered him as a "Good hack. Quiet to ride for a lady." The red tape there is about as bad as in any Government department. I'm sure with my testimonial he would have gone off very well, instead of being knocked down, as Papa said, for a mere song. Rupert wouldn't like that.

And so for a time Papa was horseless and went about like ordinary people; but it didn't suit him. His temper began to get fretful. I decided that he must have something to jog his—to exercise him, and I came and talked to him seriously.

"Why don't you get another horse, Papa?" I said.

"Another one?"

"Yes; get a nice tame one, you know."

"Oh, no," he said. "That wouldn't do at all. I want a horse with a lot of mettle. Of course it must have some self-control as well."

"Well, couldn't you get one like that?" I suggested. "You oughtn't to give up your riding, you know."

"Yes, I daresay I could," he said. "I'm a pretty fair judge of a horse. I'll look in at TATTERIDGE'S to-morrow and see if I can find one to suit me."

I would have gone with him, but I had a party on that afternoon—Blindman's Buff and Coon-Can, I think it was.

I got back from it rather late and found Papa already returned, fearfully pleased with himself and looking very horsey with a large cigar in his mouth and a whisky-and-soda on the mantelpiece.

"What success?" I asked.

"Picked out the very horse," he said.

"Rather expensive. Cost a good deal more than Rupert, but well worth the money."

"Where is he?"

"I rode him back. He's in the stables. Come round and see him."

He showed him off with great pride.

I walked all round the horse. He winked at me and whisked his tail towards Papa.

"I suppose you didn't meet any tramps on the way down," I said.

"No. Why?"

"Well, if you had, he might have given himself away."

"Who might?"

"Rupert."

The X-Ray Eye.

"I have been sitting at the window making note of the number of buses, and the contents of passengers."—*Letter in "The Hampstead and St. John's Wood Advertiser."*



IS ENGLAND DECLINING?

The Old Hand. "THIS 'LL GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF WOT THINGS IS COMIN' TO. WHY, A FEW YEARS AGO A TIN LIKE THIS WOULD 'AVE 'AD A COUPLE OF SARDINES IN; F'r'APS THREE."

Commercial Candour.

"GENUINE SALE,
FIRST FOR FIVE YEARS."

Advt. on the window of a shop in Oxford Street.

Letter from a native who runs a regimental coffee-shop at Meerut:—

"Sir,—I am extremely sorry to bring to your kind notice of running short about ham in my stock on account of Xmas. I hope to get it very soon from Bombay. No sooner I will receive it I will let your honour know all of a sudden. Hoping for an excuse for this refusal and obliging very much for the trouble of forgiveness, I beg to remain, Sir, yours obediently," &c., &c.

How to Attract a Congregation.

"The Rev. W. F. LOPTHOUSE,
M.A. (Birmingham).
Will preach at 11 and 6.30.
ALL CORDIALLY INVITED."
Shrewsbury Commercial & Literary Chronicle.

"English Mistress for small high-class Day School in London. Degree or equivalent, and experience in high-class private school work. Churchwoman. Non-res. £100 and mid-day dinner, increasing."—*Journal of Education.*
After three months the lady expects to make nothing of an ox roasted whole.

"A suffragist tea-shop has been set up within a stone's throw of the Houses of Parliament."—*Daily Chronicle.*

"Stone's throw" is good.

MUSICAL NOTES.

THE successful appearance of the banjo at the Queen's Hall Symphony Concerts on Saturday week is, we are glad to learn, likely to be followed by a further invasion of the orchestral preserves by instruments hitherto deemed unworthy of such an honour. The prospectus of the New Romantic Orchestral Concerts, just issued, announces that on April 1st Mr. Oliver Pilditch will produce a new symphony by Professor Quantock de Banville, entitled "The Brontës," dedicated to Mr. CLEMENT SHORTER. The symphony, which will occupy ninety minutes in performance, is not only scored for every one of the instruments employed in MAHLER's Seventh Symphony, but also includes parts for a quartet of penny whistles, and a solo "Brilliantine Zither-Comb," which will be played on this occasion by Mr. SHORTER himself.

Another novelty to be produced later in the season is a Mystical Tone Poem, entitled "The Wandering Jew," by Mr. Hamish MacSlazenger, the young Russo-Scottish composer who is already known as the Moscow-Glasgow Strauss. In a brief but alluring account of the new composition Mr. Oliver Pilditch informs us that no key signature is affixed to any of the fifteen movements of which the work is made up, and that it has practically no tonality at all. A wonderful effect is produced in the *Scherzo*, in which four barrel-organs are introduced, each playing different tunes in different keys and each surmounted by a monkey wearing a red coat, while the motto theme, or *idée fixe*, is always given out by a group of Jew's harps, specially constructed for the occasion and called the "Magnifico Pomposo Solomon Glory-Harps." These, it is reassuring to hear, will be played by real Rabbis. The score of the Symphony, which occupies just under two hours in performance, measures $4 \times 4 \times 2$ parasangs and weighs almost exactly 62 poods.

Mr. Odo Gurglitz, the manager of Mr. Bamberger, writes to us with reference to the tragic experiences of DANIEL MELSA, the Polish violinist now performing in London, on which so much stress has been laid in the Press. In the biographical sketch of DANIEL MELSA, which is now being circulated, we read how during an anti-Jewish pogrom at Lodz in 1905 his playing melted the heart of the Cossack leader and saved the fiddler's life.

Mr. Gurglitz observes that he has

not the smallest intention of disputing the absolute accuracy of the above statement. All he wishes to point out, in justice to Mr. Bamberger, is that on at least four several occasions he (Mr. Bamberger) was exposed to dangers compared with which the ordeal of DANIEL MELSA was a trivial experience. The occasions were as follows: in September, 1907, Mr. Bamberger was captured by the Fifofumi cannibals in New Guinea and was *partially eaten* before he was rescued by a punitive expedition commanded by Mr. Gurglitz and the famous ex-cannibal chieftain, Gobolo, whose beautiful daughter, Ispowispop, entertained a romantic but unrequited affection for Mr. Bamberger. The second occasion was in Odessa in 1909, where Mr. Bamberger was blown up by Nihilists while he was playing the piano, and came down unhurt at a distance of nearly 200 yards, although the piano was smashed to atoms.

Mr. Bamberger's third escape was in 1910 from a boa constrictor of the deadly pompelmoose variety which, entering his bungalow at Delhi while he was asleep, wound itself round the form of the great musician. On awaking to his peril, Mr. Bamberger never lost his nerve for a moment. He just simply said, "I am Bamberger," and the great serpent submissively unwound itself, sat up in the corner with a pleading expression until the Maestro had played a brief *morceau*, and then joyfully undulated out of the apartment. Fourthly and lastly, in February, 1912, when his father-in-law, Sir Pompey Boldero, F.R.S.L., was closely observing the contents of the crater of Vesuvius and inadvertently fell in, Mr. Bamberger leapt into the boiling gulf and brought him out in a parboiled but otherwise well-preserved condition.

The list of the Queen's Hall Orchestra is—if we believe in the proverb *nomen omen*—an interesting study. It has a BRAIN for one of its principals. It has a CAMBRIDGE to strengthen its appeal to academic hearers; while two QUALIFES should endear it to cricketers. Lastly, literature and journalism are represented by a GYP, a CONRAD, and a GARVIN. We note with interest that Mr. GARVIN plays the trombone.

For Bargain-hunters.

"DETECTIVE TALES,
3d. each.
3 for 1s."

Notice in bookseller's window in Bridlington.

OUR BOOMING TRADE.

"Yes, indeed! things *are* looking up," said a chatty undertaker to his colleague last week.

"How's that?—and with all this warm weather?"

"Well, they're all broken-down doctors on our panel, and they've each got three thousand patients."

The above short dialogue illustrates the prevailing optimism, of which we can give several other instances.

The decreased takings of many thousands of shop-keepers through the operation of the Shops Act have spelt prosperity to a large number of newly-appointed bankruptcy clerks and brokers' men.

Corset-designers are saying they never had such a time. Every day some new "curve" is displayed in the advertisement columns of our contemporaries. The four-o'clock model will soon be outmoded by the "Stop-press" stays of the Lato Special Edition. Fabulous sums are now being earned by lightning fashion artists.

Princely salaries also are the reward this season of favourite football professionals. They are now "cornered," like any other commodity in demand. Enterprising club-managers are "bulling" and "bearing" their little gold-mines on the Soccer Exchange.

The soaring prices of petrol and the consequent shortage of taxis have restored the lost art of pedestrianism and set the boot-making trade on its feet again, together with the ancillary manufactures of brown-paper soles and composition boot-heels.

The prosperity of rag-and-bone-time merchants, with their parasites of the hurdy-gurdy and the German band, is going up by leaps and bounds. Meanwhile the railway returns show heavy advances, due to a strong desire in the less nutty circles of society to escape from this obsession.

The above are only a few of the indications, beside the figures of the Board of Trade, that the outlook for England is of the most encouraging.

ZIG-ZAG.

Municipal Frankness.

From the agenda of the Lahore Municipality (11th January, 1912):—

"Papers regarding an expenditure of Rs. 150 for provision of pipe-water for gwalas (cow-keepers) living in Gual Mandi, with a view to improvement in milk-supply."



FASHION NOTE.

SCENE—A popular seaside resort in winter.

She. "OH, MR. BROWNE, IF YOU SEE MY SISTER, TELL HER I'VE GONE IN. DON'T KNOW HER? OH, YOU CAN'T MISS HER, SHE'S DRESSED JUST LIKE ME."

THE DUEL.

(To a vine-grower of Provence now sojourning in England for the purpose of acquiring her language.)

You came to a clime where agues rack us,
And the chill wind never stops;
You came from the yards of young Iacchus
To a realm of malt and hops.

You came with your pleasant sun-made manners
And a bolder taste in ties;
The South on your cheek flew crimson banners,
And her songs were in your eyes.

And ever I dreamed, as sorts of weather
On weather of sorts were piled,
This courtesy soon must reach its tether—
But ever you smiled and smiled;

Flattered our rain-washed air as bracing,
And London as *gigantesque*;
Her streets you never got tired of pacing
And her views were picturesque.

And I thought anon of the morn of Crécy,
And the hour of Poitiers' field,
And the slime grew worse and the streets were messy,
And I said, "This man must yield."

The light in his eyes—is there naught can dim it?
No thrust that his heart can wrench,
And wring from his lips, "Your land's the limit,"
Or whatever that is in French?

I have it. The fog! He will pass some stricture
When he sees that ghost-filled gloom;
When, writhen and foul, like a Futurist picture,
The street coils into the room.

And the fog did come—particular, proper,
And brewed of the broth of peas;
You could cut great chunks of it off with a chopper
And hand it about like cheese.

It was horrible, octopus-armed, unnerving;
But I found you amid the press
Gay as a June-tide grig, preserving
Toujours la politesse.

One might have thought you were eating honey
As the maze of the murk you thrid;
I asked if you liked the taste. Oh, sunny
Child of romance, *you did.*

I yielded then; I knelt on a glad knee.
"London," I said, "resign!
Lady of soot, thou art Ariadne,
And this is the lord of wine."

Not soon shall memory lose that glitter;
Full oft when the vapours crawl
I shall cry for a stoup of English bitter
And drink to the grace of Gaul.

EVOE.

"From now till spring arrives Devon branch lines will daily carry 40 rabbits to every passenger."—*The Standard.*
Season-ticket holders ought to be allowed eighty each.



"YOUR HUSBAND'S A DOCTOR, ISN'T HE?"

"NO, INDEED! HE'S IN THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS!"

THE NICE PEOPLE.

THIS is a true story and the idea of it is to show how awfully decent—but you will see what I am driving at as you read on.

I had special reasons for ringing up my friend Burgess, but I did not know his number. I knew it had a 1, a 7, an 8 and a 4 in it somewhere, and was Mayfair; beyond that I was misty. Passing these figures in review, I decided it was 1478, and asked for that.

A pleasant voice came back, "Hullo!"

"Is that you, Burgess?" I said.

"No. There is no one of that name here."

"But isn't that Mr. Burgess's telephone?"

"No. What number did you want?"

"Oh, I'm frightfully sorry. I've made a mistake."

"Never mind. Don't mention it. It doesn't matter in the least."

I then asked for 1748.

A pleasant voice came back, "Hullo!"

"Is that you, Burgess?"

"No, this isn't Burgess. What number do you want?"

Again I apologised profusely; again the reply was sympathetic. "Don't trouble. It's all right."

I next asked for 1874.

A pleasant voice came back, "Hullo!"

"Hullo!" I said. "That you, Burgess?"

"No."

"Is Mr. Burgess in?"

"Mr. Burgess does not live here. What number did you ask for?"

Again I apologised, and again the reply was kindly: "It's all right. Some mistake of the operator, I expect. It doesn't matter."

Once more I decided to try, and this time I asked for 1784.

A pleasant voice came back, "Hullo!"

"Hullo!" I said. "Is that Mr. Burgess's number?"

"No, it's not."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. The fact is I've forgotten it."

"Isn't it in the book?"

"No, he won't have it there."

"What a nuisance! How very unfortunate for you! But why don't you ring up the enquiry office? They'll tell you."

"Thanks awfully, I will."

"It's all right. Good-bye."

Now wasn't that jolly? Not one of all that crowd angry or even irritated. All as nice about it as they could be.

I then rang up the office and found that Burgess's number (as I at once remembered) is 1847.

A waspish voice came back, "Hullo! Who's there?"

"Is that you, Burgess?"

"Yes, of course it is."

"All right, old chap. It's me—Harrison."

"I know it is. Do you suppose I can't recognise your voice? Why on earth haven't you rung me up before? Here have I been waiting here for hours"—and so forth.

And they were all strangers, and this was my friend!

"The members of the Cabinet are understood to be at present divided on the subject of woman suffrage as follows:—

For.	Against.
Sir E. Grey	Mr. Asquith
Lord Haldane	Mr. Churchill
Mr. Lloyd George	Colonel Seely
Mr. Birrell	Mr. Harcourt
Lord Morley	Mr. McKenna
Mr. Runciman	Lord Crewe
Mr. McKinnon Wood	Mr. Herbert Samuel
Sir Rufus Isaacs	Mr. J. A. Pease
Lord Beauchamp	Mr. C. Hobhouse

Doubtful.—Mr. Buxton, Mr. Burns."

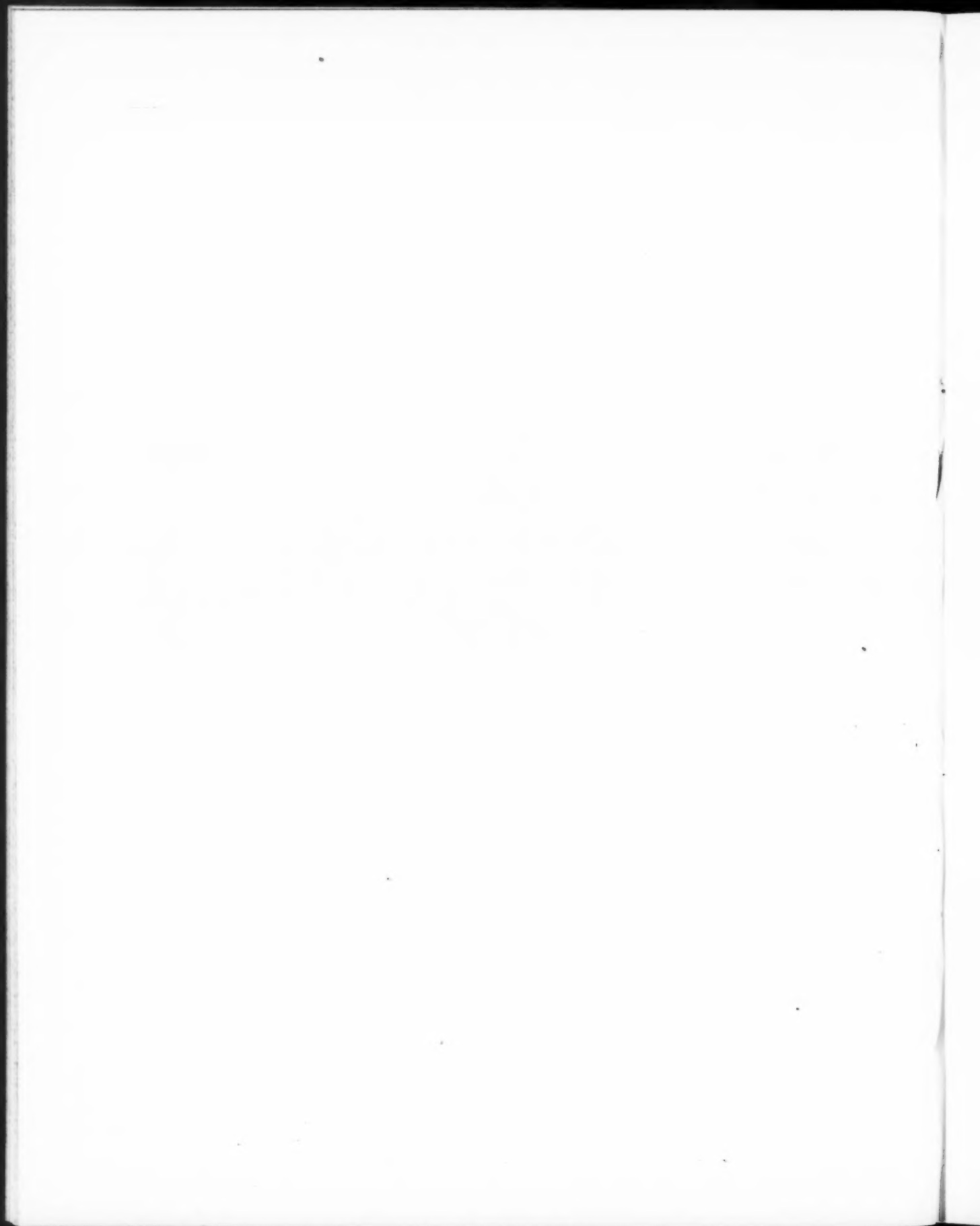
The Times, January 23.

It seems rather a pity that, with two teams so nicely balanced (the weight perhaps being slightly in favour of the side on which Lord HALDANE figures) they could not have settled it by a friendly Tug-of-War on the floor of the House. The two captains could easily have tossed for Messrs. BUXTON and BURNS.



RAG-TIME IN THE HOUSE.

[Sir EDWARD GREY's Woman Suffrage Amendment produced some curious partnerships.]



ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

(EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.)



ANOTHER INJUSTICE TO WOMEN.

Indignant Chorus. "WE'LL SOON ALTER THAT!"

House of Commons, Monday, January 20.—MAD HATTER enjoyed rather a good day. Most diligent in attendance; always in his place when crisis arises. Ever ready to take charge of disturbed affairs and smooth them out. Thus, when just now in Committee on Welsh Disestablishment Bill only three Tellers

lined up before the Mace to declare result of division, he rose promptly to occasion. The missing link was BARLOW, one of the Tellers for Opposition. Having counted his men it occurred to him that he would have time to take a cup of tea and a buttered bun before figures were announced. So he trotted off. Meanwhile the other three Tellers stood, all forlorn, waiting for their ranks to be filled up.

Whilst CHAIRMAN sat helpless in this new dilemma and Members looked on in consternation the MAD HATTER interposed, claiming that the absent Teller's vote should not be included in official return of division. CHAIRMAN pointed out that as Tellers don't vote there was nothing to count.

Something of a poser this; but the intention was good.

Three hours later, LORD BOB, "hearing a smile," as did Lord Cross on a historic occasion, administered sharp rebuke to "honourable Member opposite who appears to devote his talents to becoming the buffoon of the House."

No name mentioned; but the MAD

HATTER, with unerring sagacity assuming gibe was directed against him, appealed to CHAIRMAN for protection against such attacks. CHAIRMAN suggested withdrawal.



The MAD HATTER catches it.

"Certainly," said LORD BOB. "I am ready to withdraw if the honourable gentleman thinks it offensive to be described as the buffoon of the House. I thought that was his object." These merely incidents in the day's



LORD BOB throws the cap.

round. Great achievement was vindication of the rights of British citizens grossly assailed under cover of the Shops Act. According to his story, told in the ear of a thronged and deeply moved House, there is a carrier—(no, Sir CHARLES ALFRED, not *Cripps*)—trading between Bristol and Portishead, having for sole retinue a small but hungry boy. For some time it has been his custom of an afternoon to present largesse to his escort in the form of "a pennyworth of biscuits purchased at a refreshment room in Pill." Avowedly under coercion from the Shops Act, the purveyor of biscuits declines to trade on an early-closing day, arguing that "biscuits are confectionery, not refreshments."

And so, as in the case of Mother Hubbard's dog, the poor boy had none.

He might, of course, swallow Pill. But there are contingencies which naturally make the carrier unwilling to undertake responsibility of administering it. In his dilemma he brought the matter under notice of the MAD HATTER, who left it in hands of HOME SECRETARY, with request that he "will issue a memorandum or order to make it clear that carriers' boys and other travellers may ask for biscuits, even in small amounts, without being refused on the plea that biscuits are only sweetmeats and not proper food."

Business done.—In Committee on Welsh Church Disestablishment Bill.

Tuesday.—Great slump in Silver-Market GWYNNE. In accordance with recent habit, spent week-end in his study, wet towel bound about his manly brow, preparing fresh set of conundrums for India Office about transaction in silver carried through London market a year ago. Question paper bristled with them. Not your ordinary questions drafted by amateurs like KINLOCH-COOKE or JOHN REES (late of India). Each one equivalent to argumentative speech on topic to be handled only by a specialist.

This had enough had it stood alone. Merely preliminary procedure. FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO WAR OFFICE, who in absence of MONTAGU answers for India Office, faces ordeal with commendable courage. Reads without quaver in his voice or trembling in his limbs matter-of-fact answers in reply to allegations and insinuations pointing to something like criminal conspiracy on part of India Office and a City firm to pocket what in America is known as "graft." When he resumes his seat up gets GWYNNE with automatic regularity and in slightly different phrase repeats conundrum.

Hitherto SPEAKER, jealous for full play of freedom of speech, has permitted

this sort of thing. To-day's experience too much for patience whose long-suffering sometimes amazes House. At outset of GWYNNE's performance SPEAKER insisted that notice should be given of Supplementary Question proposed to be put.

Regardless of the snub, GWYNNE put twelfth question, when slump alluded to took place.

"These Supplementary Questions," said the SPEAKER, "are all in the nature of arguments suitable for discussion, but not for the purpose of obtaining information."

Later, when PERSEVERING PIRIE proposed to open upon SEELY battery



"PERSEVERING PIRIE."

of Supplementary Questions, SPEAKER, amid general cheering, again interposed.

"Complaints," he said, "are made to me that the end of Questions on Paper is rarely reached, many of which notice was duly given being barred by number of Supplementary Questions in the nature of argument."

The MEMBER FOR SARK, who has been saying this with perhaps tiresome reiteration through two sessions that have seen unrestrained growth of indefensible irregularity, naturally gratified at this ruling by supreme authority.

Business done.—Still (Welsh) harping on Church Bill.

Friday.—There is a matter, perhaps trifling in itself but strikingly illustrative of the systematic belittling of Woman by Man, not alluded to in to-day's debate on Suffrage question. On entering the Ladies' Gallery, whether with or without intention of chaining themselves to rail, visitors are confronted by a card hung in prominent position. On it is printed in large type

the word "SILENCE!" Why should this designedly offensive injunction be flaunted in the Ladies' Gallery? Immediately opposite is the Strangers' Gallery, where men do congregate. You may search its walls and its approaches in vain for repetition of this command.

"We'll soon alter *that*," murmured a section of the company crowding Ladies' Gallery this afternoon.

Nor is intention to snub exhausted by this mean device. Withdrawing from Gallery to Tea Room at the back, Ladies approaching the fire-place observe boldly carved over the mantelpiece the brusque command, "Get Understanding." It need hardly be said that this insolent injunction, with implied suggestion of mental density more or less nearly approaching imbecility, is reserved exclusively for womankind. It is not to be found within sight of any part of the House where Members sit, whether above or below the Gangway.

And yet how much more urgent is necessity in their case!

Business done.—In Committee on Franchise Bill ALFRED LYTTTELTON moved EDWARD GREY's amendment deleting the word "male" defining persons privileged to exercise Parliamentary Franchise. Debate adjourned.

"When the Cat's away."

"A CONGREGATION WITHOUT A PREACHER.—Owing to the stormy weather and the deep snowdrifts, the preacher advertised to take the meeting in the Good Templar Hall last Sunday evening was storm-stayed. There was no service in consequence.

"A very successful dance followed, nearly forty couples spending a very pleasant time under the guidance of Mr. Mills."

The Midlothian Journal.

"The annual dinner will be held at the Co-operative Hall at 7 o'clock. Members should get their tickets as soon as possible from their Divisional Secretaries. Dress, Uniform without belts."—*Lincolnshire Echo.* A very thoughtful provision. We wish them all a hearty meal.

"I am unable to discover any mechanical or physiological purpose served by a chin."—Sir Ray Lankester, quoted in "*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*."

Dear Sir RAY LANKESTER,
Can't you be simple,
And own that a chin
Was made for a dimple?

"Following 12 degrees of frost in the Lake District snow fell heavily from the early morning, and with a 700-miles-an-hour southeasterly wind blowing the drifts of snow at Bassenthwaite Lake were five feet deep. Some of the country roads are impassable."

Preston Herald.

Still, a 1,000 h.p. car might manage them.



SCENE.—Home of the highly-paid Child Actor.

Male Phenomenon. "LOOK HERE, MY GOOD PARENT, I SEE YOU'RE SMOKING ANOTHER OF THOSE COSTLY CIGARS. MILLICENT AND I DON'T EXPECT OUR HARD-EARNED MONEY TO BE SIMPLY FRITTERED AWAY LIKE THIS."

THE DANCE.

WHEN good-nights have been prattled, and prayers
have been said,

And the last little sunbeam is tucked up in bed,
Then, skirting the trees on a carpet of snow,
The elves and the fairies come out in a row.

With a preening of wings

They are forming in rings;

Pirouetting and setting they cross and advance
In a ripple of laughter, and pair for a dance.

And it's oh for the boom of the fairy bassoon,
And the oboes and horns as they strike up a tune,
And the twang of the harps and the sigh of the lutes,
And the clash of the cymbals, the purl of the flutes;

And the fiddles sail in

To the musical din,

While the chief all on fire, with a flame for a hand,
Rattles on the gay measure and stirs up his band.

With a pointing of toes and a lifting of wrists
They are off through the whirls and the twirls and the
twists;

Thread the mazes of marvellous figures, and chime
With a bow to a curtesy, and always keep time:

All the gallants and girls

In their diamonds and pearls,

And their gauze and their sparkles, designed for a dance
By the leaders of fairy-land fashion in France.

But the old lady fairies sit out by the trees,
And the old beaux attend them as pert as you please.
They quiz the young dancers and scorn their display,
And deny any grace to the dance of to-day;

"In Oberon's reign,"

So they're heard to complain,

"When we went out at night we could temper our fun
With some manners in dancing, but now there are
none."

But at last, though the music goes gallantly on,
And the dancers are none of them weary or gone,
When the gauze is in rags and the hair is awry,
Comes a light in the East and a sudden cock-cry.

With a scurry of fear

Then they all disappear,

Leaving never a trace of their gay little selves
Or the winter-night dance of the fairies and elves.

R. C. L.

Another Rebuff for the Mother Country.

"Hector MacLean, 25, Pine Street, Brockville, Ont., Canada, will
exchange Canadian stamps with any country but England."

Young England.

"Although Mr. Wade had his hair, moustache and eyebrows singed
in his efforts, it was found that the fire had obtained too firm a hold
to be dealt with in this way."—*Isle of Wight Herald.*

MR. WADE clearly did his gallant best. But some fires are
so grasping.

AT THE PLAY.

"TURANDOT, PRINCESS OF CHINA."

I FEEL almost certain that 7.0 P.M. is too late for a *matinée* and too early for an evening performance. As I made my way to the St. James's at this ambiguous hour—an hour sacred to the memory of Boxing Night at the Lane—it seemed that only pantomime could be my natural reward. And pantomime it was, with just a sad little echo of the old Savoy that left us on the verge of tears.

In point of colour *Turandot* is a gorgeous spectacle, but the costumes of



TRYING HARD NOT TO LOSE HIS HEAD.

Calaf Mr. GODFREY TEARLE.
Turandot Miss EVELYN D'ALROY.

the Far Orient—and there was no pretence to confine them strictly to Chinese patterns, the noblest of all being something in the style of the Samurai—do not make for a very pronounced beauty of form. I am not sure that this kind of spectacular romance, though the traditions of pantomime are against me, is not best conducted in a serious vein throughout. We are always being asked to keep one half of our face fixed in astonished admiration and the other half crinkled with laughter. I speak not only of the figures of the pageant, part beautiful, part grotesque, but of the words, which kept on shifting from an atmosphere of passion and intrigue to one of wanton flippancy. Calaf, for instance, the successful suitor, never relaxed from the key of high sentiment, but *Turandot* was all over the gamut.

However, one is habituated in pantomime to the mixed quality of the entertainment; the real trouble here was the incredible poverty of the fun. I am

forced to entertain one of two suspicions, each alike repellent to me. Either, when Sir GEORGE ALEXANDER witnessed the performance of Dr. VOLLMÖLLER's play, the weakness of its humour escaped him through lack of familiarity with the language; or else Mr. JETHRO BITHELL, its translator, has done injustice to the German version. In this painful dilemma, I incline to the former theory.

There are rumours, indeed, that we have been spared even a worse disaster through the action of Messrs. SASS and NORMAN FORBES in revising their parts. If this is so, I assume that they gave time and care to the task, though there is historical precedent for improvisation. For Gozzi, of the eighteenth century, who adapted at Venice the old Persian theme, and introduced from local sources the four alleged comedians, *Pantalone*, *Tartaglia*, *Brighella* and *Truffaldino*, wrote no text for these characters, but trusted to the actors' native gift of gag.

I suppose it is too much to hope that the authorities should at this late hour repent themselves and cut out all the words. The general verdict seems to be that the play is a thing (like little children) to be "seen and not heard." But I am afraid there are points in it—the riddles, for example—which could not be expressed by dumb show. And it is not only the humour that could be spared; for more rotten riddles it would be hard to imagine, and the third of them, of which the answer was "love," was the most unlikely thing in the world to come from the lips of so ruthless a creature as *Turandot*.

And what does the author mean by that tag of poetry in which he speaks of the lady's heart as being "cold as the snows of yesteryear"? Surely VILLON would never have enquired as to the whereabouts of *les neiges d'autan* if he hadn't known that they had long ago melted.

As for the acting, I don't know what we should have done without Miss EVELYN D'ALROY. There was a delightful piquancy in her mincing voice and manner. Mr. GODFREY TEARLE was a brave figure, but his personality was of no particular period. Miss MAIRE O'NEILL was attractive in the small part of *Zelima*. Of the humorists, Mr. SASS, as *Pantalone*, and Mr. FRED LEWIS, as *Brighella*, came nearest to being funny. The background was always effective; but the stage of the St. James's was not designed for pageantry and seemed badly overcrowded in the riddle durbars.

I am sorry not to foresee a very great future for so sporting a venture, unless of course it can be reproduced on a kinemacolor film.

"THE HEADMASTER."

A four-act comedy, preceded by a four-act music-drama, makes a heavy programme for a dress rehearsal *matinée* that begins at 3.30, and many of the actors in the audience had to slip away before the finish. Critics, too, with a First Night performance before them (to which nobody asked me, so it is not my affair), had to choose between their consciences and their stomachs, and I can easily guess which won.

The title of *The Headmaster* gave promise of a school play, but it was largely misleading. The scholastic element was little more than the incidental environment of an ordinary plot turning upon two rather commonplace ideas—(1) a clergyman's passion for preferment, (2) an innocent remark misinterpreted as a proposal of marriage. Complications ensue from the fact that the designing widow who thus entraps the reverend gentleman is the very person to whom he is to owe his offer of preferment, and that his chance of a bishopric is his chief attraction in her eyes. But unfortunately this lady (very soundly played by Miss IVOR) is not constructed on the lines of Miss LOTTIE VENNE, but is large and domineering and in deadly earnest—all which is apt to get on our nerves almost as much as upon those of her harassed victim.

But Mr. CYRIL MAUDE as an absent-minded Headmaster of the last generation was a glorious figure, and his scene with those two clever school-boys, Masters ERIC RAE and KENDRICK HUXHAM, who came to him for a confirmation class, and not, as he imagined, for a swishing, has never been bettered in realistic comedy. All the others,



THE BRIDE (SELF)-ELECT.

Mrs. Grantley Miss FRANCES IVOR.
Rev. Cuthbert Sanctuary Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.

too, were excellent, from the *Portia* of Miss MARGERY MAUDE, most sweet and sympathetic, and her sister *Antigone*, very nicely played by little Miss KATHLEEN JONES, to *Palliser's Grantley* (Mr. ARTHUR CURTIS), a perfect prig of an usher, and Mr. JOHN HARWOOD's school sergeant, the real manager of the academy. Mr. JACK HOBBS was a quite human prefect, in love, of course, with the Headmaster's daughter; and Mr. COMBERMERE (*Jack Strahan*), the junior master who won her heart, had really the air of a 'Varsity Blue (a rare thing on the stage), even if he did not make the most convincing of lovers. And I shall have left nobody out when I have mentioned the truly decanal performance of Mr. BIBBY as the *Dean of Carchester*.

In the end the play drifted off into a pleasant series of detached episodes, with a touch of serious sentiment which did no harm.

It is a great pity that it did not start a month ago and catch the school-boy; but its whole atmosphere, if a little thin in parts, should appeal just as closely to all who have ever been young; and I look hopefully, as a good uncle must, to seeing it run on into the Easter holidays.

In *Haarlem there Dwelt* is a pleasantly sordid little music-drama for three. A young Dutch peasant-girl, bored by her dull dog of a husband, arranges openly to fly with her lover, but changes her mind at the last moment on finding a message pinned to her husband's coat requesting her, before eloping, to mend a hole in it. If I had been arranging a removal of this kind, I should not have been put off by a thing like that; but of course it is a question of taste.

The play was practically wordless. This did not trouble the husband, who read the paper at meals and had a most extraordinary gift of taciturnity. The music and the action did nearly all that was needed, with the help of notices that popped up from the orchestra, saying, "Three months' interval," "Six months' interval," "Two days' interval." As usual, the music took its own time, and the action and what words there were had to wait upon its convenience. But it was impossible to be discontented so long as Miss MARGERY MAUDE was on the stage. She made an exquisite picture and played with the very nicest intelligence. O. S.

"CHENG NAM JIT POH (NEWSPAPER).

We beg to inform the public that this paper will begin publishing on the 1st of January, 1913. Being an up-to-date Chinese newspaper and having for its object to publish only what is right it enjoys the largest circulation ever obtained by any other paper."

The Singapore Free Press.



"ADVANCED GOLF."

(With apologies to JAMES BRAID.)

IN A CITY RESTAURANT.

(Founded on Fact.)

ALL my meagre dishes come
Stamped in the accepted way,
But a more impressive thumb
Seems to mark their edge to-day;
Waitress of the beating heart,
You're a novice in the art.

From the depths you soared to fame,
From the kitchen, I'll be bound,
Like Eurydice you came
Panting from the underground;
Orpheus brought her back to earth;
You arrive by solid worth.

She, alas! did not remain.

May you meet a brighter fate!
When you find a trusty swain,
When you need no longer wait,
May you rise to wealth and bliss:—
Here's a penny for you, Miss!

Clearing the Ground.

"On the whole any confidence there may be as to success seems to be upon the side of the opponents of the extension of the suffrage at this particular juncture, rather than upon the side of its opponents."—*Yorkshire Observer*.

An anxious correspondent, who has been suffering from the great servant trouble, writes that since the latest form of servant-hunting has reached the point of advertising to prospective maids the attractions of neighbouring churches, cinemas and barracks, we appear to be very near something like this:—

House parlourmaid wanted at once in the Pytchley country; mount supplied, also caps and aprons; outings on all meet days and Sundays; near kennels. Splendid mixed shooting and free choice of doctor. A little occasional work necessary, but manicurist kept.—Apply ——. Advertiser will send car.

THE PROFESSIONAL REMOVER.

WHEN first Mrs. Robinson told Robinson that she had every reason to believe that Mrs. Smith, who lived next door, was as anxious to get to know Mrs. Robinson as Mrs. Robinson was determined not to get to know Mrs. Smith, and warned him against any effort on the part of Smith to get to know him in order to assist Mrs. Smith's object, Robinson pooh-pooh'd the suggestion, as far as he was able to follow it. He promised, however, to keep his eyes open and, doing so, he could not conceal from himself that Smith's comings and goings did seem to coincide to a suspicious extent with his own. So he obeyed his wife's instructions and avoided him, a process which involved many deviations and sudden changes of programme, much waste of time and even some lies. Eventually he confessed to his wife that there could be no doubt of Smith's fixed determination to follow him about and force a meeting. Indeed, he became very incensed about it.

The climax was reached in his barber's shop. Robinson had sat there for twenty long minutes in order to secure the attention of his special artist. His patience had just been rewarded, and himself wrapped up for his hair-cutting, when who should come in but Smith, and where should he seat himself but in the next chair to Robinson? The position was impossible: Robinson could not be crudely offensive, and so, sweating with suppressed emotion, he spoke a reluctant "Good morning. . ."

Later he vented his wrath in the presence of his friends and acquaintances at the persistence of a man who followed him even into his barber's! "I wish I knew," he said, "of a means of removing from existence those persons, the constant effort and strain of avoiding whom make a misery of one's whole life!"

A week later his office-boy announced that a man, who withheld his name and otherwise behaved mysteriously, desired to see Robinson. He would not indicate the nature of his business; he would not send a message. He must see Robinson and see him alone.

"Show him in," said Robinson, and there appeared a soberly clad, secretive man carrying a small black hand-bag. He had the exact appearance of a travelling dentist, if there are such things.

"Your name?" asked Robinson.

"Is irrelevant," came the answer.

"Your business?"

"Requires leading up to. . . Murder, I submit, is a practice justly looked down on, but it is the motive and not

the achievement that is so disliked. It is the malicious purpose or the mischievous purposelessness of it that offends against good taste. A worthy object may relieve manslaughter of half its blame; a pre-eminently worthy object may even popularize it. Take war, for instance."

"Don't go and tell me that you are only a soldier," said Robinson, with a trace of disappointment in his voice. "Your preface had led me to hope that you were an assassin."

"I am the latter," said the man. "I do not kill promiscuously in the service of my country. I kill specifically on the commission of private individuals."

At first Robinson was inclined to suspect that this was too happy a coincidence to be genuine and to see in the whole affair some ingenious scheme for attracting attention to a patent medicine. But, observing the man closely and remembering that his (Robinson's) wishes with regard to Smith were known to others, he changed his mind. "Someone," he suggested, "has mentioned my name to you?"

The man nodded.

"Is the Removal of Persons One is Constantly Having to Avoid . . .?"

"My business? Yes. But, if you will hear me out, I hope to disabuse your mind of the prejudice you might have at first blush against my calling."

"We will not trouble you," said Robinson, judiciously, "for we are already in your favour."

The man gave vent to a sigh of relief. "Then we may at once proceed to the real object of my visit," he said.

Robinson smiled. "I can guess it. You are anxious to exert yourself in what I will call the case of Smith and me?"

"That is what I was proposing to do, if you will excuse me."

"I will certainly excuse you."

"And bear me no malice?"

"None whatever," said Robinson, raising his eyebrows. "Why should I?"

For the first time the man looked almost surprised. Then he pulled himself together. "Why should you? Why, indeed?" he muttered. "Is life as valuable as all that? Then, I take it, I have not only your approval but your definite permission to proceed?"

"Not only my permission, but my authority," said Robinson.

The man opened his bag and displayed the instruments of his craft.

"What particular means do you prefer should be employed?" he asked.

"I leave that to Smith," said Robinson. "It is only fair to consider his convenience as far as possible."

The man paused. "Pardon," he said, "but Smith has left it to you."

Robinson, frowning a little, asked the man to explain how Smith came to mention the matter.

"Most certainly," said the man, as he produced a piece of rope from his bag and tied Robinson politely but firmly to the chair in which he sat. "I thought you had understood that Smith was the someone who mentioned your name to me. He has tried, he says, to discredit the suggestion first of his own wife and then of his own eyes, and to believe that it was only coincidence that so often brought you together. That proving impossible, he has tired himself out in his efforts to avoid you, and, however worrying and inconvenient the process has been, he has, up to now, hesitated to resort to the extreme measure of employing me in the affair. But, he says, the thing goes too far when he cannot even go into his barber's to be shaved without finding you there waiting for him."

A PICTURE WITH A MESSAGE.

I PAINTED a picture yesterear

Of a child of angel mien

Resignedly quitting this earthly sphere

Ere he reached his earliest 'teen;

At the sight of this poignant work of mine

I felt that a heart of stone

Would add to the parents' painted brine

A silent tear of its own.

But critical dealers waved it back,

Nor hesitated to say,

Since life itself could be grim and black,

All art should be glad and gay;

Till a blight spread over my wonted joys

To think I was like to be

Saddled for years with a "Dying Boy's"

Dispiriting company.

So I added a maid with a laughing eye,

Who bade their grief begone

By waving a box of pills on high

(The label was blank thereon).

A pill proprietor called; the string

Of his purse he quickly loosed;

I put in his name, and he's had the thing

Extensively reproduced.

"The Hon. E. S. Montagu left last night by the Punjab Mail for Udaipur.

The Hon. E. S. Montagu, M.P., Under-Secretary of State for India, left Calcutta, on Tuesday night for Madras."

The Englishman.

We shall watch this serial with interest.

"DRY ROT.—Interesting article sent free to any address."—Advt. in "The Manchester Evening Chronicle."

We wonder what they call the uninteresting ones.



A "NUT" WITHOUT ITS SCREW.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

A WORD of serious warning to those about to read Mr. OLIVER ONIONS' latest novel, *The Debit Account* (SECKER). Be careful not to do as I did and miss an inconspicuous note opposite the dedication, in which it is stated that "This novel is complete in itself, but the early history of its protagonists, and the events leading up to the situation with which the story opens, are to be found in a previous book entitled, *In Accordance with the Evidence*." If you should neglect this, and if (again like myself) you should be so unfortunate as not to know the earlier book, your enjoyment will be marred by an exasperated perplexity as to what on earth the characters are driving at. Not until page 108 do you get any clue to the special position of the hero, Jeffries, with regard to his girl-wife. Briefly the explanation is that he himself had—for a good and sufficient motive, not to be set down here—killed her previous fiancé, and escaped punishment for it. This book shows how in the end he does not escape. It is a clever tale, exceedingly well told, tracing out logically and truthfully the developments inherent in the situation with which it starts. Mr. ONIONS has an amazing gift also of making ordinary things not perhaps beautiful but new and uncommon. Whether he speaks of setting up house in a jerry-built cottage at Hampstead, of a business-dinner at the Berkeley, or chops and tea at a model club in Chelsea, he makes of each a thing challenging outside expectation. And you never know what he will say next—which is a rare and refreshing stimulant. *The Debit Account* is thus certainly a book for all who admire quality in fiction—but I repeat my advice that you should know first what debt is being paid.

This is the age of artistic restraint. Dramatists are taking to the "quiet curtain." Comedians in farce, in moments of embarrassment, stand like statues instead of zig-zagging about the stage and slapping people on the back; and novelists with a lurid story to tell become almost dry in their manner. To this school belongs Mr. ANTHONY DYLLINGTON. His earlier novel, *The Unseen Thing*, had as weird and sensational a theme as one could invent, but his style and restraint gave it a dignity which raised it above the merely lurid. His latest work, *The Stranger in the House* (WERNER LAURIE), belongs to the same genre, and once more he has been completely successful in avoiding crude sensationalism. It was not an easy task. I wonder what the manufacturers of the old three-decker would have made out of the same material. They would certainly have been fascinated by the central idea—of an evil spirit entering into a woman's body at the moment of death, as her soul left it. And I seem to see them gloating over "the Boy," the idiot heir of *Lord and Lady Brayden*. Mr. DYLLINGTON's art carries him triumphantly past all the pitfalls of his story. He has himself admirably in hand at all times. He has a great gift of condensation. I commend to authors who cannot do without plenty of elbow-room a perusal of chapter seven of this book. It is a fifty-thousand-word novel in sixteen pages. The only drawback to the story, to my mind, is that which mars all novels of the supernatural, namely that what should be the climax becomes something of an anti-climax owing to the fact of the reader's having adjusted his mind to contemplation of the horrible. The great moment in all these stories is about half-way through, when the reader begins to suspect. When he knows, the tension slackens. None the less *The Stranger in the House* is to be commended highly.

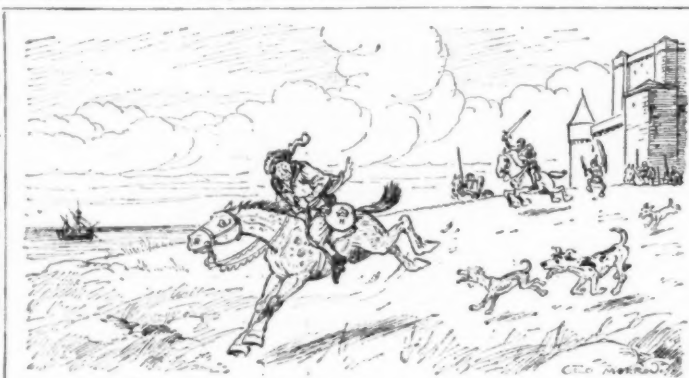
If two people are to lose each other in the heart of London; if all the efforts of Scotland Yard and the agony column are to be of no avail; if, moreover, to increase the poignancy of the situation, they must needs live within a stone's throw of each other in Soho, it is essential, I suppose, that one of them at least should suffer from a lapse of memory and a change of name. This, at any rate, is what happens to *John Faithful*, who mislays his daughter *Marcelle* in Chapter I. of *SOPHIE COLE'S In Search of Each Other* (MILLS AND BOON). But if there is something a little too mechanical about her plot I must congratulate the authoress heartily on her choice of characters. The young gentleman who extracts teeth in *You Never Can Tell* is a butterfly sort of creature at best. Here we have a dentist light-hearted enough when he chooses, but of sufficient serious merit to make a worthy husband for a sweet and *spirituelle* young girl. And who marries *John Faithful* (for he is a widower) when he remembers his right name and recovers his daughter? Who, out of a hundred guesses, but one of those delightful ladies who do the fashion sketches with figures like the Tower of Pisa, and write of love and dress and infantile ailments for the weekly feminine magazines? Never before have I had the heart of one of these oracles laid bare to me any more than I have pierced behind the veil which shrouds odontological domesticity. In *Search of Each Other* is a pleasant if rather superficial tale, and whatever one thinks of it the authoress has at least resisted the temptation to call it "Behind the Throne" or "Crowned with Gold."

Upon my word, I hardly know what to say about *The Friendly Enemy* (MILLS AND BOON). I have no doubt about my own feelings in the matter; I was absorbed. But then I like being preached at, providing the preacher is a humorous and observant fellow, obsessed by no tiresome cranks and free from prejudices and limitations. Mr. T. P. CAMERON WILSON is all that and more also, but I doubt if he is sufficiently definite in his conclusions to appeal to everybody. He is an idealist and a cynic, but he allows neither his idealism nor his cynicism to blind him to the facts as they are; in the end he leaves the reader alive to many new and oppressive problems, possessed of the solution of none of them and uncomfortably obscure about life and his proper attitude to it in general. There is no actual story in the book, but a series of well-connected and mutually relevant instances. All are taken from the meaner streets of London and most of the characters are urchins. A fairy godfather descends upon these and takes them out of their squalor into the fresh clean country, where one might expect them to thrive. So far from doing that, they find the country lacking in something as essential to life as it is indefinite; they insist upon returning to their squalor forthwith, and when they get there they are still unsatisfied. Unhappily, the author does not go on to tell us what to do about it. If you wish your emotions to be stirred on broad and easy lines, go elsewhere. If you are ready to have your intelligence exercised while your sympathies are being enlisted; if you are prepared to be left to form your own philosophy, or, having had your eyes opened, still to go

on without one, read this book. At any rate I can promise you some most amusing types and three really delightful urchins of the true Cockney breed.

My bristles are always mildly agitated by a novel in which I am introduced to a writer whose work is never revealed to me. Mr. Bravery, in *Lot Barrow* (SECKER), was a milk-and-watery young man who wrote essays. Apart from the sympathy which he entertained for a maid-of-all-work, his life was lacking in colour; I hoped, therefore, that he was going to write something that would atone for his amiable unimportance. And on page 102 Miss VIOLA MEYNELL raises the cup of expectation to my lips, only to dash it abruptly to the ground. "Mr. Bravery sat at a little table, with his manuscript before him. He began to read aloud, and we shall hear a little of what he read. But, on the whole, no. Those who wish may discover it for themselves." Frankly, I felt no craving for this research work; and since the author declined to appease my curiosity, I let it go, and with it the faint interest I had ever felt in the man. Throughout this novel, which has for its setting a most delightfully fragrant, gillyflowerly farmhouse, Miss MEYNELL

is excessively careful of the nerves of her readers. Perhaps that is why she spared us Mr. Bravery's essays. But I am always glad to have my nerves tried, and though I can do with an occasional rest I must have something more than atmosphere, however wholesome or rarefied. *Lot Barrow* is, in short, the kind of book that many people profess to like, but very few find time to read. It is a pity that this is so, for great care



A KEEPER OF THE KING'S PRIVY PURSE INTERPRETS HIS TITLE LITERALLY.

and not a little distinction of phrase have gone to its making.

The Book of Woodcraft and Indian Lore, by Mr. ERNEST THOMPSON SETON (CONSTABLE), ought to be in the hands of every Boy Scout, and I would advise those elders who put it there to avail themselves of the rare occasions when it will be free, and dip into it on their own account. A good many of Mr. SETON's preliminary pages are devoted to clearing the Red Indian of accusations of cruelty, laziness, uncleanness and treachery with which prejudice has loaded him. This is a matter which possibly is of more moment to American readers (for whom the book was written) than English, though the information gathered is full of general interest. One of the unwritten laws of Indian etiquette, for instance, is the charge: "Do not talk to your mother-in-law at any time, or let her talk to you." This, however, is by the way. The real part of the book is its woodcraft. Here is one of seventeen tests which the young Brave in Mr. SETON's suggested organisation must pass in order to qualify as a Tried Warrior: "Light fifteen successive fires with fifteen matches all in different places and with wildwood stuff." If an ordinary smoker could do that, there would be no more tragedies of the last wax vesta.

"Mrs. ——— celebrated her one hundredth birthday yesterday. She was visited by her twin sister, age ninety-five." — *South Wales Echo*. The absence of the third member of the triplet, an old lady of eighty-two, was much regretted.